

Madeley Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
of Madeley Town Council held on
Monday, 17th February 2020, at Jubilee House, High Street, Madeley
commencing at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT Councillors: S Chadwick (Chair), AR England, H Morgan, N England
P Taylor, S Taylor, P Watling, D White

Officers: Clerk to the Council, Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), Deputy Clerk, Cosby Takyi (work experience student)

F19/40 Apologies

Councillor R Coates - Out of Area
Councillor G Spruce - Family Commitment

Resolved:

To accept the apologies.

F19/41 Declarations of Interest

Councillors S Chadwick and P Watling declared an interest as Trustees of the Anstice Community Trust (this refers to Minute F19/45)

F19/42 Remarks from the Chair

There were none.

F19/43 Public Discussion

There were no members of the public present.

F19/44 Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 9th December 2019 be confirmed and approved for signature.

F19/45 Funding for Temporary Anstice Community Trust Staff

It had been brought to the attention of the Town Council that ACT may need some financial assistance to fund additional staffing in the form of a caretaker and a café staff member. This assistance would be for a period of six months while the activities in the building are established. A report by the RFO, in which she provided costs for six months was considered. The report proposed that the financial assistance would be in the form of a loan.

It was noted that a local council may lend money, on any terms which may be mutually agreed, to any non-profit making voluntary organisation providing or maintaining in its area or for the benefit of its inhabitants anything which the council could itself provide under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 19. Thus, Madeley Town Council has the power to make a loan to the Anstice Community Trust, on any terms which may be mutually agreed. It was noted that since the objects of this type of loan are social rather

than financial, such loans are often made interest free. Having been proposed by Cllr AR England (Mayor) and seconded by Cllr D White it was

Resolved:

To **recommend** to Full Council that in order to ensure sustainability of the excellent work being done by the Anstice Community Trust (ACT), the Council provide a loan to ACT of £9,401.14. This being the cost of six months' salary and on-costs for a caretaker and café staff member. The loan should be interest free and repayments to commence after a minimum of six months. The Town Clerk and the Responsible Finance Officer to be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Mayor, to agree the terms of repayment with ACT.

Having declared an interest, Cllrs S Chadwick and P Watling abstained from voting.

F19/46 Strategy

This is a standing item on the Agenda but there was nothing to discuss on this occasion.

F19/47 Finance & General Purposes Action Plan - Assets

To maintain high standards of service for all Council owned or managed assets and to provide facilities that are safe, well maintained and welcoming.

A revised and updated Assets section of the Action Plan for the Finance & General Purposes Committee was presented (see Appendix A)

Noted

47.1 Madeley Public Toilets – to consider options

At the previous meeting it was resolved to ask the Clerk to research options for providing public toilets before agreeing to the redecoration of the existing toilets. The Clerk presented a report with the result of his research. He had made enquiries about the installation and maintenance of prefabricated semi-automated toilets and had established that the capital cost for purchase and installation would be substantial at around £50-60,000 and that there would also be higher maintenance costs. The Clerk considered that it would be very difficult to justify the capital costs of providing a modern prefabricated toilet facility when the existing public toilets are fit for purpose.

Resolved:

To continue with the current arrangements for providing public toilets in Madeley

Resolved:

That the Council accepts the quotation from M Norry Decorators to redecorate the existing public toilets at a cost of £3,160.

F19/48 Finance & General Purposes Action Plan – Budget & Finance

To monitor and control the Council's budget and to set a precept that balances the needs of the community against the community's ability to pay.

A revised and updated Action Plan for the Finance & General Purposes Committee

was presented (see Appendix A).

Noted

48.1 Expenditure Approval

to approve expenditure transactions

The Responsible Finance Officer had prepared the Expenditure Transactions Approval List for the period to 5th February 2020 and a supplementary Approval List for the period to 17th February 2020.

Resolved:

That the expenditure transactions recorded on both lists be confirmed and approved for payment.

It was noted that Halls Commercial Estate Agents had been commissioned to carry out a post-refurbishment valuation of the Anstice Memorial Hall. The Clerk said that he would inform all councillors when the results of the valuation was known.

48.2 Financial Reports

Financial Summary – Cashbook

The Financial Summary – Cashbook report is an un-reconciled Receipts and Payments report showing opening and closing bank balances and total receipts and total payments (for each committee) for the period.

The Responsible Finance Officer had prepared the Financial Summary – Cashbook report for the period 1st April 2019 – 5th February 2020 for information.

Noted

Financial Comparison Report

To note actual monies received and spent compared to 2019/20 budget.

The Responsible Finance Officer had prepared the Financial Comparison Report for the period to 5th February 2020 for information.

Noted

48.3 Independent Parish Remuneration Panel Report, November 2019

In Spring 2019 the Independent Members Allowances Panel was asked by Telford & Wrekin Council to carry out reviews of the Borough Council allowances system and of the Town and Parish Councils' allowances and Chair's Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) within the Borough. The Clerk presented the report of the Independent Panel and his accompanying report about Madeley Town Council councillor allowances. He informed councillors that the Council is legally required to consider the recommendations of the Independent Panel when setting allowances. It was noted that Madeley Town Council councillor allowances are currently £590.76 per annum and the chair's Special Responsibility Allowance is £1,186.80 per annum and that the Independent Panel had recommended allowances of £650 and £1,300 respectively. The RFO

confirmed that she had allowed for the recommended increases when setting the councillor allowance budget for 2020/21.

Resolved:

To accept the following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel report:

- That the basic councillor allowance should be increased to £650 per annum with effect from 1st April 2020.
- That the Chair's Special Responsibilities Allowance should be increased to £1,300 per annum with effect from 1st April 2020.
- That the allowances should be upgraded annually in line with the index applied by Telford & Wrekin Council.

48.4 Service Level Agreement with Small Woods

A report and recommendation from the Environment Committee was considered. Following a successful six-month pilot of the Telford Woods project in Madeley Parish, the Environment Officer proposed a 12 month Service Level Agreement with Small Woods from 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2021 which would continue to deliver a half-day session every week (excluding school holidays) of volunteers working across the various public woodland spaces in the parish.

Resolved:

To enter into a Service Level Agreement with Small Woods to deliver the Telford Woods project from 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2021 at a cost of £6,000 for the year.

48.5 Review of Financial Regulations – Contracts

Section 13.1.2 of the Financial Regulations directs that the Clerk to the Council or RFO shall seek to obtain 3 quotations where the value of expenditure will be £1,500 or above.

At the Financial & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9th December 2019, the RFO was asked to seek advice from the Internal Auditor about increasing the lower threshold for seeking three quotations from suppliers.

The RFO reported that the Internal Auditor has said, *"I have looked and cannot see anything that stipulates that the financial limit has to be this low. From doing a quick search and review of other Town Councils financial regulations, the limits for obtaining quotes vary from £1,500 up to £5,000."*

Therefore, the Town Council can set a lower threshold that is appropriate for the council's needs. A lower threshold of £1,500 would be more appropriate to smaller parish councils but not larger parish and town councils who will regularly breach this lower limit on routine expenditure. Consequently, a lower threshold of between £3,000 to £5,000 would be a more appropriate figure for a council the size of Madeley Town Council.

Resolved:

To **recommend** to Full Council that the Financial Regulations should be amended so that the lower level threshold requiring 3 quotations from suppliers is increased to £4,000.

48.6 Request for Approval for a Virement

A virement is a paper transfer of funds from one budget heading to another part way through a financial year. It is usually carried out when there is likely to be an overspend under one budget heading but there will be an underspend under another heading.

The RFO explained that for the 2019/20 financial year there will be an overspend on the Anstice Memorial Hall (AMH) refurbishment project in the region of £37,000 due to unanticipated work relating to the discovery of asbestos, reinstatement of original features, differences in floor levels and additional finishing work required for the rental units. With the increase in precept for 2020/21 allowing the snagging carry forward to be decreased, this allows for an additional £26,443 to be allocated to the AMH refurbishment project leaving a shortfall of just over £10,000.

In the current financial year there is a budget of £10,000 for youth provision. There has been no demand on this budget heading and after speaking to the Chairman of the Leisure & Community Committee, the RFO considered that there was not likely to be any demand on this budget heading for the remainder of this financial year.

It was noted that £10,000 has been put into the budget for the forthcoming financial year (2020/21) for Youth Provision. Councillors said that they would like this to be used to support youth clubs at the Hub on the Hill, Park Lane Centre and the Anstice in 2020/21.

The RFO requested approval for a virement of £10,000 from the Youth Provision budget heading to the AMH Refurbishment Project budget heading.

Resolved:

To approve a virement of £10,000 from the Youth Provision budget heading to the AMH Refurbishment Project budget heading.

F19/49 Finance & General Purposes Action Plan - Regeneration

To play a proactive role in regeneration projects that revitalise the area and are of benefit to local people.

A revised and updated Action Plan for the Finance & General Purposes Committee was presented (see Appendix A).

In November 2019 Telford & Wrekin Council announced that they would be investing £5million between 2020 and 2022 to boost key high streets in the Borough, including Madeley. The money will be used to support a range of capital schemes to help improve the look and feel of town centres and help attract more visitors, shoppers and businesses. The Clerk said that he is awaiting further information from Telford & Wrekin Council about this money will be distributed.

It was suggested that local businesses and community organisations should be contacted to form a 'business partnership' in preparation for this regeneration investment from Telford & Wrekin Council.

Noted.

F19/50 Correspondence

There was none.

F19/51 Information

There was none.

F19/52 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee of Madeley Town Council will take place on Monday, 27th April 2020 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Signed:

Dated:

(Chair)

Finance & General Purposes Action Plan for meeting on 17th February 2020

APPENDIX A

Area of Interest: F1 – Assets

Strategic Aim

To maintain high standards of service for all Council owned or managed assets and to provide facilities that are safe, well maintained and welcoming.

Ongoing work	Key Project	Target Date for Completion	Lead Officer	Notes
Jubilee House- management and maintenance Preparation of rooms for hire and associated admin Provision of facilities for tenants	Door entry system – decide on action to be taken	April 2020	P Griffiths J Jones	June 18 – outline report on options received from BiT. Four companies have been contacted with a view to providing quotations for an upgraded door entry package. As yet no response has been received. Company that fitted new automatic door at the Anstice to be contacted.
	Jubilee House boilers are over 20 years old – various problems with heating system resulting in call outs	Ongoing review	J Jones	08.02.18 – Full Council resolved to put an additional £10,000 into Earmarked Reserves in 2018/19 for Jubilee House in case the boilers need to be replaced. Boilers are being monitored. Prohibitive quotation received for replacing the whole system. New pump was fitted at a cost of £2,370 in June 19 No more action at present.
	Installation of canopies over the front and back doors	Jan 2020 Feb 2020	J Jones	Canopies will be fitted over the entrances during February 2020
	Obtain quotations for redecorating the offices, kitchens and washrooms.	Jan 2020	J Jones	Agreed. Work to start 24.02.20

Jubilee House ctd	Obtain quotations for new carpet tiles in the offices.	Feb 2020	J Jones	Agreed. Work to be done mid March after painting is complete.
	Obtain quotation for LED light fittings in the offices.			Property Officer has requested quotations from two electrical companies Note: the light fittings are set into the grid of ceiling tiles – replacement will not affect the decoration of the offices.
	Obtain quotations for sanding and resealing the Marks Room floor	Feb 2020 March 2020	J Jones	Two quotations received – Property Officer seeking a third quotation
	Consider updating the planted areas around Jubilee House to give a more modern contemporary feel.	June 2020	J Jones	One quotation has been received – refining requirements with the contractor.
Public Conveniences – management and maintenance	Public toilets need redecorating	April 2018 Oct 2018 March 2019 Sept 2019 Jan 2020	J Jones	Work to be put on hold until Clerk's report on automated toilets is considered.
Allotments at Sutton Hill and West View – management and maintenance		On-going	C Hallam J Jones	03.02.20 Status of waiting list: 13 in total covering Sutton Hill and West View Terrace
War Memorial – management and maintenance		On-going		

Area of Interest: F2 – Budget & Finance

Strategic Aim

To monitor and control the Council's budget and to set a precept that balances the needs of the community against the community's ability to pay.

Ongoing work	Key Project	Target Date for Completion	Lead Officer	Notes
Financial Management	Internal financial controls check for 2019/20	April 2020	RFO	Third quarter check completed. Fourth quarter check is arranged for April 2020.
	Publish financial information on the website for external audit and Transparency Code.	On-going	RFO	Complete
	End of year publications Ongoing publications – quarterly updates	June 2019		Complete Ongoing
VAT		On-going	RFO	MTC is now registered for VAT. Quarterly VAT returns submitted.

Ongoing work	Key Project	Target Date for Completion	Lead Officer	Notes
Review Investment Strategy	Confirm long-term budget provisions (Devolved Services, Loan account, Buildings Reserve) and allocate to Money Market Accounts/UK Debt Management subject to terms	On going	RFO	Investments are: Yorkshire Bank £87,229.94 1 year fixed bond. Matured and re-invested. Will next mature in January 2021. United Trust Bank - £85,000 1 year fixed bond. Matured in July 2019, £1,402.74 interest received. – Renewed to July 2020 Working account is Co-operative Bank Community Direct Plus account
Maintain Asset Register		On-going	RFO	Updated for 10.06.19 Full Council meeting. Will next be reviewed in March 2020.
Payroll				
2019/20 year		On-going		

Area of Interest: F3 – Regeneration

Strategic Aim – to play a proactive role in regeneration projects that revitalise the area and are of benefit to local people.

Ongoing work	Key Project	Target Date for Completion	Lead Officer	Notes
Anstice Memorial Hall	See Full Council Action Plan			